

**Kenneth Robert Janken. *Rayford W. Logan and the Dilemma of the African-American Intellectual*. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993) 319 pp., \$35.00.**

Rayford W. Logan has been little more than an obscure shadow in African-American historicity leaving, as his biographer notes, “a rich intellectual legacy without, it appears, having left a visible imprint on historic events” (198). Earning a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1932, Logan proceeded to become a trailblazer in the field of African-American history, seeking to use his intellect in the fight against racism.

Documenting Logan’s accomplishments, Kenneth Robert Janken uses Logan’s experiences as a “perch from which to observe and analyze the intellectual and social history of the African-American elite” (vii). He examines Logan’s civic activism beside such distinguished persons as W.E.B. DuBois, Walter White, Mary McLeod Bethune, and A. Philip Randolph. Logan’s accomplishments include: initiating voter registration tactics, working with the Roosevelt Administration to eliminate segregation in the military, attempting to sway American foreign policy toward developing nations, and obliquely participating in most significant civil rights struggles of his generation. Janken notes, however, that although a dedicated activist for nearly seven decades, Logan remained a “second-tier leader” (234) whose “maverick” ways were not adaptable in organizational structures, thus marginalizing his legacy as a civil rights leader.

Janken notes that Logan was “above all a historian” (ix) and devotes considerable space to Logan’s academic achievements. Drawing from Logan’s personal diaries and from his papers, Janken describes the trials Logan faced as a Black scholar in predominately white academia, dedicating an entire chapter to the “polemics over the publication” (164) of *What the Negro Wants* (1944), Logan’s most controversial publication. Logan worked with North Carolina Press to establish a book of essays outlining the observations and expectation of Black leaders. It was an excellent opportunity for Logan, but it also placed him in a political quagmire as he strove to maintain the integrity of the project while attempting to appease his Southern liberal publishers. The difficulties in this collaboration taught Logan a valuable lesson: “achieving successes in the white world and remaining true to his principles were incompatible goals” (164). After a protracted struggle with the publishers over the militant tenor of the essays, the book was published. Selling well, this anthology served as a barometer to gauge rising Black militancy by relating in no uncertain terms that Jim Crow and Southern liberal silence was no longer tolerable.

## ***Explorations in Sights and Sounds***

Janken deftly employs a mixture of primary and secondary sources to situate Logan's experiences in their contemporary contexts. His work is well documented and includes an extensive bibliography. The bulk of Janken's study focuses on Logan's activities from 1930's - 1950's, leaving the reader curious as to Logan's activities during the pinnacle of the Civil Rights Movement. Logan remained an active scholar until his death in 1982, but Janken offers only a tangential examination of his twilight years (1952-1982). This deduction does not, however, nullify the worth and importance of this book dedicated to shedding light on the obscure shadow of a brilliant man who dedicated his life and his career to the pursuit of racial justice.

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**Clinton M. Jean. *Behind the Eurocentric Veils: The Search for African Realities*. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1991).**

This book represents a thoughtful critique of Eurocentric traditions of social and historical analysis. The principal thesis, advanced in the idea of moving along the same cultural ideals and the same dynamic forces as the west, is an exceptionally brilliant idea. Both the liberal and Marxist systems subsume Third World cultural processes under universalist theories of evolution that do not apply universally.

In this book, special emphasis is expressed on Africa and African people. It attempts to show that African traditions have different motivations and consequences from western traditions. Actually, this is quite similar to the Afrocentric work of Molefi Asante and Marimba Ani.

Jean elaborates on mainstream thinking and modern life by providing radical alternatives and suggesting the national approach to Black studies, making the book unique. He provides very valuable information which is not present in the existing scholarly works.

Although the book addresses the above issues very well, it would have served more of its stated purpose if it had considered the socio-economic and political environment of Africa and African people before the beginning of so called "western civilization." The inclusion of such a section would have reinforced the outstanding civilization and advancement of the African people in all aspects of life before colonization.